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JUAN FERNANDEZ DE CASTRO RODRIGUEZ
ROLANDO MASFERRER

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Memorandum

TO : Director, FBI (105-84265)

DATE: 2/9/60

FROM : SAC, Miami (105-2307 Sub II)

DECLASSIFIED BY SP8 MAC/ILSR

ON 5-6-94 (JFK)

JUNE

SUBJECT: JUAN FERNANDEZ DE CASTRO

RODRIGUEZ;

GEORGE VALDES AMABLE;

ROLANDO MASFERRER ROJAS - VICTIM

KIDNAPING - CONSPIRACY

IS - CUBA

CLASS. & EXT BY SP6 BJA/ DMS
REASON-FCIM II, 1-2.4.2 2
DATE OF REVIEW 8/3/91

ReBuairtel 2/4/60, concerning recommendations contained in Miami letter dated 1/29/60; Butel 1/29/60 concerning microphone surveillance utilizations. *X(u)*

With respect to the microphone installation made in this instance, the following is submitted: *X(u)*

The microphone was installed in room 342 and monitored in room 340, adjoining. The installation was made in the following manner: Room 342 consists of a foyer leading in from the hall, a bath just to the left of the foyer and a sleeping-sitting area beyond the foyer and bathroom. The walls are plaster, the ceiling of the sleeping area is plaster, and the foyer ceiling consists of fiberglass, acoustical tile approximately 24" x 24" square, laid in "T" channels in such manner that merely pushing up on them lifts them out of the channel. They are not fastened down in any other manner. *X(u)*

The microphone was placed in one section of acoustical tile, located as close to the sleeping-sitting area as possible, and close to the wall dividing rooms 342 and 340. This was done by cutting out a rectangular portion of the back of the tile, just large enough to accommodate the Mouse preamplifier and microphone, down to, but not including, *X(u)*

4 - Bureau (RM)
2 - Miami

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SLIP(S) OF
DATE 8-26-81

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the textured finish surface of the tile so that replacing the tile would make it appear the tile was whole, and no different from any of the other tile in the ceiling. Additional soundproofing material, fiberglass, was placed over the top of the microphone to filter out extraneous noises and sound coming from other parts of the hotel. The microphone leads were then attached to a section of shielded microphone wire, taped and the microphone wire fed through a hole in the partition between the two rooms, and brought out into room 340 through a hole made by removing one of the corresponding tiles in room 340. The hole in the partition was already existent as a result of feeding conduit and airconditioning ducts between the rooms at the time of original construction. ~~(u)~~

All of the above wire work, of course, was concealed above the afore-described ceiling in the open space between the tile ceiling and the actual poured cement ceiling, a space approximately two feet high. ~~(u)~~

The tile containing the Mouse microphone was placed back into position and the area carefully checked for any fallen debris that might cause suspicion, and all such matter was carefully removed. ~~(u)~~

In room 340 the microphone wire was fed into the input side of the Mouse power supply and the outputs fed, (1) the 500 Ohm output fed into the 500 Ohm input of a Magnecorder tape recorder, (2) the High Impedance output attached directly to a pair of crystal earphones. ~~(u)~~

Preliminary tests of the above installation showed it to have better than average pick-up of conversations in room 342 with, of course, no extraneous noises, such as running water, radios playing or the television set turned on, any one of which would tend to decrease the intelligence of any conversation in the room to a point below usefulness. ~~(u)~~

The above installation was made by SA ROBERT E. SUNKEL, Soundman assigned to the Miami Office, and was completed approximately two hours before the contemplated meeting. ~~(u)~~

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series or parallel, cutting these leads might or might not disconnect service to other rooms in the hotel. In addition, in view of subject's expressed suspicions, it was decided not to do anything with the loudspeaker at all; if both the television set and the loudspeaker were out of operation, subject's suspicions would most certainly be aroused.

It is also pointed out that subject was then occupying a room in the hotel, which was known, and he would therefore most certainly be suspicious of any appointments not in room 342 which he normally would have in his own room. Therefore, the television set was not removed.

With respect to the three points raised in Bureau airtel of February 4, 1960, the following is submitted:

(1) SA GEORGE E. DAVIS was aware of the kidnap plot against MASFERRER, and the possibility that MM-635-S might be involved was considered; note MM-635-S arrived in Miami around noontime, January 27, 1960, the same day that VALDES, an unidentified aide to RAUL CASTRO, and SA HOLLOMAN, acting in an undercover capacity, were scheduled to meet at about 7:30 P.M. At 12:45 P.M., January 27, 1960, MM-635-S advised he had just arrived from Havana and was being detained by Immigration and Naturalization Service, Miami, for questioning. No attempt was made by SA DAVIS to question him at that time for obvious security reasons. ~~(u)~~

At about 1:20 P.M., Mrs. CATHERINE TAAFFE telephonically advised SA ROBERT JAMES DWYER that she had been informed by VALDES that an aide to RAUL CASTRO had arrived in Miami. She claimed the aide had met with VALDES, and was anxious to meet with the local police officer concerning the kidnaping of MASFERRER.

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Miami determined from the District Director, INS, at about 4:30 P.M. that MM-635-S was still in custody of INS, had been in continuous custody since he arrived, and was due to be released within a few minutes. This information, therefore, appeared to preclude the possibility of MM-635-S being involved, inasmuch as being in INS custody, he could not have met with VALDES as reported by TAAFFE. X(u)

At approximately 5:15 P.M., MM-635-S telephoned SA DAVIS, stating he had just been released by INS and was calling from a nearby pay phone. The following interrogation took place by SA DAVIS in a further effort to establish if MM-635-S might be involved in the kidnaping plot. MM-635-S stated he was nearby, but had to leave immediately for an appointment for which he was already late due to his detention by INS, and that he was supposed to have called JOHN EK (phonetic) earlier in the afternoon, that he was spending the night at EK's (phonetic) home. SA DAVIS asked MM-635-S if he was going to meet any other Americans that evening, having in mind the local police officer the Cuban Agents were scheduled to meet. MM-635-S answered in the negative. DAVIS then brought up the matter of a meet with MM-635-S who suggested 8:00 the same evening. He was advised that SA DAVIS had two other appointments that evening and would be busy at 8:00 P.M., but that MM-635-S should call him later in the evening in case of any urgent developments. MM-635-S agreed. It was decided to meet personally the following morning. X(u)

The fact that MM-635-S suggested an 8:00 P.M. meet with SA DAVIS on the evening of January 27, 1960, seemed to further preclude his involvement in the kidnaping plot, as the Miami International Hotel meet was scheduled for 7:30 P.M. The probability that he was not involved was made known to SA HOLLOMAN and SA ALBAUGH, therefore, by SA DAVIS. X(u)

SA DAVIS refrained from volunteering the name of VALDES to MM-635-S for reasons of security, and at no time X(u)

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did MM-635-S mention this name. SA DAVIS did not participate in the arrests at the Miami International Hotel on the evening of January 27, 1960. No further contact was had with MM-635-S by DAVIS until after his arrest, and this office had no reasonable way of knowing about his involvement prior to his arrest. (u)

In mitigation of the informant's position, it is noted he has claimed he did not know the purpose of his contact with VALDES until after his last contact with SA DAVIS, at which time it was apparently too late for him to withdraw. It is also noted he subsequently explained to SA DAVIS he was not thinking clearly at the time he was last contacted by SA DAVIS because of loss of sleep and prolonged questioning by INS; that he would have immediately reported the facts to SA DAVIS after the meeting if he had not been arrested. (u)

(2) SA HOLLOMAN was aware of the informant's identity by name only prior to his meeting with the subjects. He had no reason to believe the informant would be involved and had, in fact, kept in close contact with SA DAVIS prior to the meeting in order to determine whether there was any possibility that the informant might be in contact with VALDES. There was no indication the informant was involved in the plot; therefore, when a man by the same name came to the meeting with VALDES, SA HOLLOMAN concluded that if this was actually the informant, he must be double-crossing the Bureau. In any event, SA HOLLOMAN concluded it was too late at this point to logically cut the informant out of the conspiracy without revealing his status to VALDES, and thereafter proceeded to treat him as a subject. When the meeting had reached its conclusion he thereupon voiced the agreed signal for the agents in the next room to move in and make the arrests. (u)

(3) The microphone surveillance of the meeting between SA HOLLOMAN and the subjects was rendered practically useless because the television in the room occupied by (u)

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HOLLOMAN and the subjects was plugged in by one of the subjects immediately after the latter entered. None of the conversation of the subjects, and only part of the conversation of SA HOLLOMAN was understandable in the next room. Supervisor ALBAUGH was monitoring what conversation could be understood, with one ear against the connecting door, and the other with an earphone. It was possible thereby to overhear the agreed signal from SA HOLLOMAN to move in and make the arrests. Supervisor ALBAUGH, upon entering the room occupied by HOLLOMAN and the subjects, placed one of the subjects (who turned out to be FERNANDEZ) under arrest and searched him for weapons. ALBAUGH did not recognize him personally, never having seen him before; however, upon requesting his name and comparing his features with the identification card in his possession, he first realized he must be MM-635-S. At this point it was too late to do anything other than treat him as a subject, which was done. (u)

Previous inquiry at the hotel had revealed GEORGE VALDES was registered alone. There was no indication as to the identity of the person or persons who might accompany him to the meeting. Other agents had been assigned to discreetly observe the public facilities of the hotel in an effort to identify any other Cuban intelligence agents who might be around; however, their efforts produced no affirmative results. It was not possible to observe the room in which VALDES was registered without being obvious.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

In consideration of the above, I believe that the overall handling of this matter by this office was one reflecting alert and decisive action in which a difficult problem was resolved without causing a long and costly investigation.

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