

SUBJECT: Mrs. David L. Christ

1. On 15 September 1960, 3 staff employees (David Christ, Thornton Anderson and Walter Szuminski) were arrested by the Cuban G-2 while installing audio surveillance equipment against the New China News Agency in Havana. About the same time an Agency case officer, Robert Neet, and a stay-behind agent and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. (Mario Nordio)⁰⁶ were picked up. All six were jailed. Subsequently, Mrs. (Nordio) and Neet were released and deported.

2. The 3 staff employees were operating under alias identities which have stood up to date (Daniel Carswell, Eustace Danbrunt, Edmund Taransky). The staff employees and the stay-behind agent were tried on 17 December 1960. On 10 January 1961, the staff employees were sentenced to 10 years in jail, and the stay-behind agent was ordered deported. The deportation took place shortly thereafter.

3. Following the arrest, the 3 Agency employees were first detained at the G-2 headquarters in Havana and shortly thereafter were moved to the LaCabana prison. It was possible to keep them supplied with food, necessities, radios, reading material, etc. On 23 January in spite of the immediate appeal of the sentence filed by their lawyer, the 3 men were moved to the Isle of Pines where living and sanitary conditions are intolerable. Prisoners are required to perform hard manual labor, and there is an insufficiency of food.

4. With the assistance of Mr. Hugh Kessler, a U. S. consular official, close contact was kept with the 3 men until diplomatic relations with Cuba were severed. Through a Washington attorney, James R. Murphy, arrangements were made with a Cuban lawyer, Dr. Fernando Colomar, to represent the 3 men in court. Colomar was not told of any Agency interest in the operation. Through the joint services of Messrs. Kessler and Colomar, the 3 men were supplied with pocket money, food, clothing, toilet articles, etc. After diplomatic relations were severed, Colomar continued to visit the men until they were transferred to the Isle of Pines.

5. The 3 men have been held in the Modelo Prison, Nueva Gerona, Isle of Pines since January 1961. We have been successful in getting money and supplies to them through the Washington Attorney to the Swiss Embassy in Havana. They have maintained contact by letters. Their last correspondence was written on 17/18 October 1962. They are believed to be in reasonably good health. The Swiss are attempting to verify a report that 3 Americans were transferred to the Boniato Prison in early November 1962.

6. It has been necessary in this case to conceal Government interest in the 3 prisoners in order to avoid their execution and/or full debriefing on the sensitive information they possess.

7. The Washington Attorney has obtained associate counsel in Mexico City and in Chicago, Illinois. The Chicago Attorney, who is unwitting of Government interest, (Constantine N. Kangles) visited Havana in May/June 1962 and as of November 22, 1962 received word that as soon as possible he will be invited back to Cuba to negotiate with Fidel Castro on this case. Kangles expects the release of the 3 men not later than the first week in January 1963.

8. Other operational efforts to secure the release of the men are in progress. We have avoided keeping Mrs. Christ fully briefed on the specifics of the efforts being made, as she tends to be critical of the Agency and of the fact that she is unaware of any significant interest in the case in the Executive Branch of the Government. She has previously seen Messrs. Allen Dulles, General Cabell, General Maxwell Taylor, and General Carter.

9. Mr. James Donovan, who has appeared in connection with negotiations for the Playa Giron prisoners, has been made aware of the 22 Americans held in Cuba and of the Agency interest in 3 of those prisoners. He has not been told their true names.

10. David Christ's wife, Wilma, and their six children live in the Washington area where they have been frequently visited by members of the Agency. She has explained to neighbors that her husband is away on a long TDY for the Government which has become a permanent assignment and that in line with the new regulations on overseas travel of dependents, she has not been allowed to follow him. Wilma Christ has been paid her husband's accumulated per diem and salary.

11. David Christ is 45 years old (his birthday was 20 January). He

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is a graduate of Pennsylvania State College with a degree of B. S. in Electrical Engineering. He worked before the war for the Atlas Powder Company and was a 1st Lt. in the USAAF from 1942 to 1946. Following the war, he instructed at Pennsylvania State College until 1950 when he joined the Agency.

12. Wilma Christ is 42 years old. There are 6 children in the family:

Thomas, age 18

Elaine, age 16

Linda, age 12

Susan, age 9

Stuart, age 5

Roger, age 3

The 2 older children have been briefed on the situation and are aware of their father's predicament.