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JFK ASSASSINATION SYSTEM

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TESTIMONY OF WALTER ELDER

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ELDER, WALTER
ASSASSINATIONS
CASTRO
MCCONE
KENNEDY, JOHN F.
GIANCANA, SAM
MAFIA
HARVEY
BAY OF PIGS
OPERATION MONGOOSE
WIRETAP
BALETTI, ARTHUR
HOUSTON, L.
GRAY, GORDON
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
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WARD & PAUL

410 First Street, S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003

1 Mr. Elder. Walter Elder, 7018 Tedd Drive, Falls Church,
2 Virginia 22042.

3 Mr. Schwarz. Are you today employed by the CIA?

4 Mr. Elder. I am.

5 Mr. Schwarz. When were you first employed?

6 Mr. Elder. 10 September, 1951.

7 Mr. Schwarz. Could you recount what your duties were
8 at the Agency between 1959 and 1965 in just summary form?

9 Mr. Elder. In 1959 I was a senior intelligence duty
10 officer in the Office of Current Intelligence. On 8 February,
11 1960 I became Assistant to the Director with the specific
12 assignment as Executive Assistant to the Deputy Director who
13 was then General Kebble.

14 I continued in this capacity until General *Cabbel* ~~Keble~~ retired
15 at the end of January, 1962. Mr. McCone became Director on
16 29 November, 1961.

17 On 1 December I was assigned an added responsibility as
18 his briefing officer.

19 Mr. Schwarz. 1961?

20 Mr. Elder. Yes, sir. This job grew in responsibility
21 and on 3 May, 1962 I became his Executive Assistant and served
22 with him until he left, 28 April, 1965.

23 Have you kept in contact with Mr. McCone since then?

24 Mr. Elder. I have.

25 Mr. Schwarz. In both a personal and professional sense?

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1 part of his time?

2 Mr. Elder. That is correct. He made one extensive trip
3 in the accompaniment of Mr. Dulles to visit not only Chiefs
4 of Station in Europe but also to visit with the heads of
5 friendly liaison services. He made a trip to the Far East.
6 The principal point of it was a meeting of the Chiefs of Station
7 from the Far East area **at Bagge**, where, of course, he was
8 briefed extensively.

9 He also received extensive briefings at headquarters between
10 the period, I think he became a consultant technically on
11 the 13th of October.

12 Mr. Kirbow. Did you accompany him on these trips?

13 Mr. Elder. No, I did not.

14 Mr. Kirbow. But Mr. Dulles did accompany him, at least
15 on the European trip?

16 Mr. Elder. The European trip, Mr. Helms and Mr. Bissell
17 accompanied him, among others.

18 Mr. Kirbow. Would you give us some idea of about how
19 much time you would estimate he spent alone with Mr. McCone
20 on this trip to the Far East, and ~~then~~ tell us about how much
21 time he spent collectively with the briefings by the various
22 Chiefs of Station?

23 Mr. Elder. I am sorry, who spent time? Mr. Dulles did
24 not go on the Far East trip.

25 Mr. Kirbow. Mr. McCone and Mr. Dulles, the time they

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1 spent together on the European trip and Mr. McCone with Mr.
2 Bissell and Mr. Helms on the Far East trip?

3 Mr. Elder. I believe the Far Eastern trip lasted about
4 10 days. The trip to Europe was about two weeks. They
5 travelled together. They were not necessarily quartered together.
6 But they were together for the full working day and there
7 were usually evening business sessions.

8 Mr. Kirbow. Do you of your own knowledge know if they visited
9 both the ~~Luxembourg and the Munich~~ stations during that
10 trip?

11 Mr. Elder. No, I do not know that precisely.

12 Mr. Kirbow. Do you have any reason to think that they
13 would have avoided those two stations?

14 Mr. Elder. I can think of no reason to avoid those
15 two stations except that they are not major stations.

16 Mr. Kirbow. Were there any records in Mr. McCone's
17 files of the details of the briefings or of other meetings
18 of importance on either of these trips?

19 Mr. Elder. There are records but they are skimpy because
20 he felt that he had no official capacity and no official
21 need for those records.

22 Mr. Kirbow. Would you give us some idea about how deep
23 within the structure at headquarters agency he contacted
24 people for any material briefings?

25 Mr. Elder. He contacted all the deputy directors and

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1 Mr. Schwarz. Did you send it and did you do anything
2 about it?

3 Mr. Elder. Yes, I did. It's addressed to Colonel
4 J.C. King.

5 Mr. Schwarz. How do you know that?

6 Mr. Elder. I remember it very well. I had the weekend
7 duty with Mr. Dulles. We shared it. He would say I want
8 this done, I want this done.

9 I related to Colonel J.C. King. I also remember right
10 here that he relayed to Mr. ~~Ned Hurlman~~, Chief of Cuban
11 Branch.

12 Mr. Shwarz. Your memory, Mr. Elder, is unbelievable.
13 It is fantastic, is a better way of putting it.

14 Mr. Elder. Is it a curse or a blessing?

15 Mr. Schwarz. Have you always had that amazing memory?

16 Mr. Elder. Yes, I have. It's just a gift.

17 Mr. Schwarz. What were the circumstances?

18 Mr. Elder. He had reviewed a paper.

19 Mr. Schwzrz. He, Dulles?

20 Mr. Elder. Mr. Dulles had reviewed a paper on the
21 weekend. He would line them up like this (indicating). We
22 would go through, take notes and relay them, his assistants,
23 his views on these things.

24 You will note the date on this, 10 April, 1961. All
25 right, the next weekend, he knew then was the action against

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1 said and the record of the cable is before the Committee and
2 it says, do not get the Agency involved in this kind of
3 recommendation in so many words in that last sentence.

4 It does not say that the actions that were being proposed
5 by the coup group out there that were made well aware to
6 overthrow him or to take the brother and the ruler out of
7 action, so to speak, at that time in no way contemplated
8 assassination except for what the remark had been to the
9 Ambassador, do not overlook this as a possibility.

10 Did it?

11 Mr. Elder. My recollection is, Mr. Kirbow, the acting
12 Chief of Station, **Dave Smith**, pointed out that among the
13 plans of all the myriads of reports that we were getting, that
14 there was a proposal that assassination of Diem and Nu
15 would remove the problem.

16 (Discussion off the record.)

17 Mr. Elder. This was a proposal.

18 Mr. Kirbow. Excuse me.

19 I think in all fairness here we have digressed to the
20 point where Mr. Elder may wish to refresh his recollection
21 from the documents that we have offered everybody else because
22 I believe that you and I are in agreement this may not be
23 exactly what the document is.

24 I think we have put you in the position of going from
25 one end of the world to the other, and that may be unfair at

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