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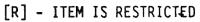
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#### JFK ASSASSINATION SYSTEM

#### IDENTIFICATION FORM

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Chairman Church. Would you please take the oath? 1 2 Do you swear that everything you will testify to in these proceedings shall be the truth, the whole truth and 3 nothing but the truth, so help you God? 4 Mr. O'Connell. I do. 5 TESTIMONY OF JAMES P. O'CONNELL 6 Mr. Schwarz. Would you state your name? 7 Mr. O'Connell. My name is James P. O'Connell. 8 Mr. Schwarz. And what is your address? 9 Mr. O'Connell. 1333 Elsinore Avenue, McLean, Wingi 10 22101. 11 Mr. Schwarz. Before we proceed substantively let me 12 just put on the record some matters. 13 First, you understand that you have a right to counsel? 14 Mr. O'Connell. I understand that. I just read it. 15 Mr. Schwarz. And you should also be advised that you 16 have your rights under the Constitution, including your 17 rights under the Fifth Amendment, if at any point you wish 18 to assert whatever rights that you do have that are under those 19 Constitutional provisions. 20 Do you understand that? 21 Mr.O'Connell. Yes. 22 Mr. Schwarz. And if at any time you feel that you 23 need an attorney you have the right to ask for an 24 attorney, do you understand that? 25 TOP SECRET

S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003

Phone (Area 202) 54

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4-6000	l	pills?
202) 54	2	Mr. O'Connell. The man that created them is Dr. Raymond
Phone (Area 202) 544-6000	3	Trichler.
Phone	4	Mr. Schwarz. Did.he hand the pills to you?
	5	Mr. O'Connell. Yes.
	6	Mr. Schwarz. Did he know what the pills were for?
	7	Mr. O'Connell. I don't think so.
	8	Mr. Schwarz. But he knew they were illegal?
	9	Mr. O'Connell. He knew they were illegal.
	10	Mr. Schwarz. And were the pills not tried out on some
	11	experimental subjects in the U.S.?
L C	12	Mr. O'Connell. Yes.
O & PAUL	13	Mr. Schwarz. And proven to be lethal?
WARD	14	Mr. O'Connell. Well, to the extent I will tell you
	15	that, we used them on hamsters.
	16	Mr. Schwarz. And also monkeys?
	17	Mr. O'Connell. No, as far as I know, just the hamsters.
	18	Mr. Schwarz. But anyway, you knew they were lethal.
603	19	Mr. O'Connell. Yes.
0.C. 200	20	Mr. Schwarz. And you handed them over to Rosselli?
ngton, l	21	Mr. O'Connell. Yes.
., Washi	22	$^{/}$ Mr. Schwarz. And had the Technical Services made poison
eet, S.E	23	pills before as far as you know?
410 First Street, S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003	24	Mr. O'Connell. As far as I know. I have no idea.
4101	25	This was my first experience with that sort of thing.
955	DocId:3	2281988 Page 4 TOP SECRET

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Mr. O'Connell. I am sure it is over there.

your possession, that might give you a more accurate timing than

We don't have it presently.

5 Mr. Wides. With regard to the discussion of authorization, 6 would it have been following on Mr. Madigan's point, that this 7 was a fairly serious and unusual operation that you were given, and that you would have asked, is this authorized? Or how did 8 9 the question of Mr. Dulles authorizing it come up, as best you 10 recall? רר Mr. O'Conhell. I told you, I knew that Mr. Dulles -- I was 12 told that Mr. Dulles had authorized it, I can't say quite when 13 it happened, but I know I was told. 14 Mr. Wides. You testified this morning -- I don't want to put words in your mouth -- I thought you testified that you 15 were sure that Mr. Edwards told you at this meeting when he first 16 gave you the assignment that you were not sure that Mr. Bissell's 17 also mentioned that when you later met in your office. 18 Mr. O'Connell. I would stick with that, yes. I think it 19 First Street, S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003 probably was when I -- when Colonel Edwards called me he 20 said, this probably has the blessing of the DCI. 21 22

Phone (Area 202) 544-6000

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I am giving to you now.

Mr. Madigan.

Do you know if Dr. V. S. Roosevelty who Mr. Wides. was head of the Technical Services Division at the time, was witnessing about this?

TOP SECRET

Mr. O'Connell. I wouldn't want to bet my life that he

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wasn't. But he was at a meeting when the bills were delivered, and Dr. Treichler came over to Colonel Edwards'office.

99

Mr. Wides. But you don't recall whether you ever knew that **Recognize** knew what it was in connection with as distinct from merely knowing it was a lethal pill, is that right?

Mr. O'Connell. I can't say -- to my personal knowledge, the discussion never came up when I was there. I don't think he is a dummy, and I don't think There is any dummy, and I think they had a general idea.

But as far as I know they were never officially told.
Mr. Wides. To your knowledge, before you went overseas
no one else in the office of Security, Mr. Bannerman, Mr.
White or Mr. Hall, none of those men or anyone else knew about
the project, only yourself and Mr. Edwards?

15 Mr. O'Connell. Well, I would say this, to my knowledge they were never briefed. However, I think I brought up an 16 incident this morning where Colonel Edwards was on leave and 17 Comonel King called Mr. Bannerman, who was his 18 deputy, and assumed that Bannerman knew all about it and started 19 talking about it, what are we going to do about 20 this -- I don't know what the conversation was about. And 21 Bannerman called in and said, what was this all about? 22 Mr. Wides. This was in 1962 before you left? 23 Mr. O'Connell. Yes. It was while I was up in the office. 24 And I said, I don't have the authority to brief you on it. 25

**TOP SECRET** 

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

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14-6000	1	Mr. Wides. Were you ever aware, whether you were formally
Phone (Area 202) 544-6000	2	notified or just got a rumble or heard through the grapevine,
	3	that the CIA was getting some information about these threats,
	4	or some information about groups who might pose a threat in the
	5	Washington area, not from Bureau sources or military sources,
	6	but from CIA sources, did you ever hear any rumble of that kind
	7	Mr. O'Connell. Yes.
	8	Mr. Wides. What did you hear?
	9	Mr. O'Connell. The only way I got involved in it was that
	10	Howard Osborn would have a nine o'clock meeting every
	11	morning with his deputies.
U L	12	And they had a proprietary organization in the Office of
D & PAUL	13	Security which I think had informants.
WARD	14	Now, I don't know their identities, but it would come out
	15	in the meeting, and they would have some names for them. I
	16	couldn't tell you what they were.
	17	Mr. Madigan. What was the proprietary called?
	18	Mr. O'Connell. The name that strikes me and I
۳00	19	know part of it, but I couldn't tell you exactly I think it
D.C. 20003	20	Was
in (to)	21	Mr. Madigan.
a her	22.	Mr. O'Connell , something like that.
1991	23	Mr. Wides. You say you think they had informants?
rirst Street,	24	Mr. O'Connell. They obviously did, I guess, because the
5	25	way this would come out, so-and-so advised at a meeting last
		TOP SECRET
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NW 50955 DocId: 32281988 Page 7

WARD & PAUL

		IVP SECKEI
202) 544-6000	1	night.
<u>۱</u>	X(B) 2	Mr. Wides. If you associate that with
Phone (Area	9 Nov 93 3	you must have been told more than just, we have an informant.
Phoi	4	How would it be discussed at the meeting, through this
	5	proprietary we have access to information?
	6	Mr. O'Connell. No, it usually would be the Deputy
	7	Director that that was under. And that was under OIS.
	8	Mr. Wides. Victor White?
	9	Mr. O'Connell. Victor White.
	10	Mr. Wides. And what would he say about how
	11	fitted into the picture?
PAUL	12	Mr. O'Connell. That never came up. I just drew that
ð	13	conclusion, that they had potential.
WARD	14	Mr. Wides. Why would you assume that they used a proprie-
	15	tary as opposed to just having some agents penetrate a group?
	16	Why would you think in terms of their using the
	17	Mr. O'Connell. I can tell you what I think.
	18	First of all, I wouldn't want to use government employees.
003	19	Mr. Wides. Why couldn't the CIA personnel just run
D.C. 20	20	agents who would be
nington,	21	Mr. O'Connell. That is in fact what they were doing.
410 First Street, S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003	22	These people that were proprietary were not CIA employees. They
reet, S.	23	were pontract teams.
First St	24	Mr. Wides. Why would you have thought that they would hav
410	25	gone the route of using the proprietary people as opposed to
		TOP SECRET
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WARD & PAUL

l	Did you have any knowledge during the 1970-1971 time frame
2	of any effort outside of Florida with regard to Cubans to fire
3	on the Keys or on the Florida area there with a boat that
4	would be disguised as a Russian boat, which was really a
5	group of people, some of whom were assets of the Agency?
6	Mr. O'Connell. No.
7	Mr. Madigan. You never heard of anything like that?
8	Mr. O'Connell. Nothing of that, no.
9	Mr. Madigan. Did you ever run across a fellow by
10	the name of Jerry Henning in your dealing with Roselli
11	and Maheu?
12	Mr.O'Connell. No.
13	Mr. Madigan. You never heard of the name?
14	Mr. O'Connell. I never heard of the name.
15	Mr. Madigan. Did you handle the Agency contact with Mr.
16	Maheu about having him coordinate or set up or be involved
17	in the supplying of a female to thus foreign leader back in 1959?
18	Mr. O'Connelll. A couple of them, as a matter of fact.
19	Mr. Madigan. A couple of foreign leaders?
20	Mr. O'Connell. Yes.
21	Mr. Madigan. What was your involvement in that? Am I
22	right about 1959?
23	Mr. O'Connell. It could be. There were two different
24	Occasions.
25	Mr. Madigan. What is your recollection as to the dates?
	TOP SECRET

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Phone (Area 202) 544-6000

WARD & PAUL

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

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-6000	l	Mr.O'Connell. Well, the first one was about
02) 544	2	1959.
Phone (Area 202) 544-6000	3	Mr. Madigan. And how did that come about? Why did it go to
Phone	4	you in the Office of Security as opposed to
	5	Mr. O'Connell. Just like this other one came down from t
	6	DDP, it came from the Division, as
	7	I recall it. And was coming into the
	8	Mr. Wides. Off the record.
	9	(Discussion off the record.)
	10	Mr. Madigan. What did your first contact with Maheu
	11	with regard to this project involve?
4	12	Mr. O'Connell. Well, the request came to the Security.
B PAUL	13	Mr. Madigan. It came down to you?
WARD	14	Mr. O'Connell. It came through Colonel Edwards.
	15	Mr. Madigan. To you?
	16	Mr. O'Connell. Yes.
	17	
	18	
53	19	Mr. Madigan.
.C. 200	20	Mr. O'Connell
igton, D	21	Mr. Madigan. So did you contact Maheu directly?
, Washir	22	Mr. O'Connell. Yes.
🕑 First Street, S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003	23	Mr. Wides. In this instance you were talking about
) Irst Stre	24	
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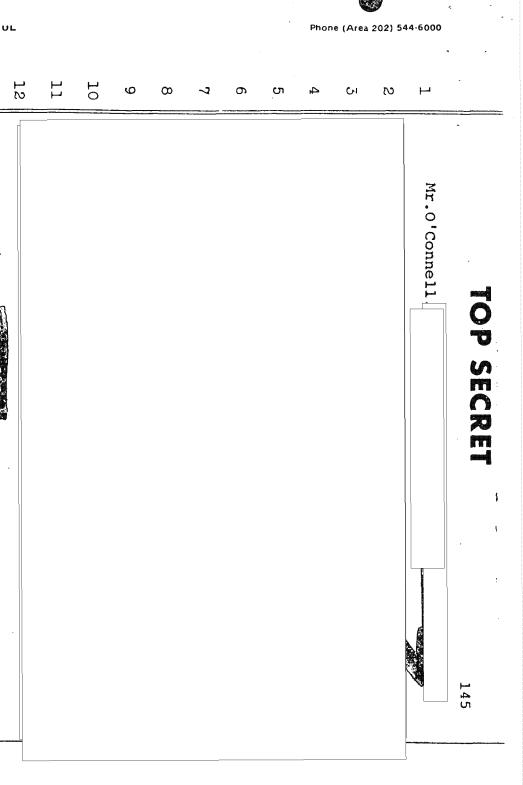
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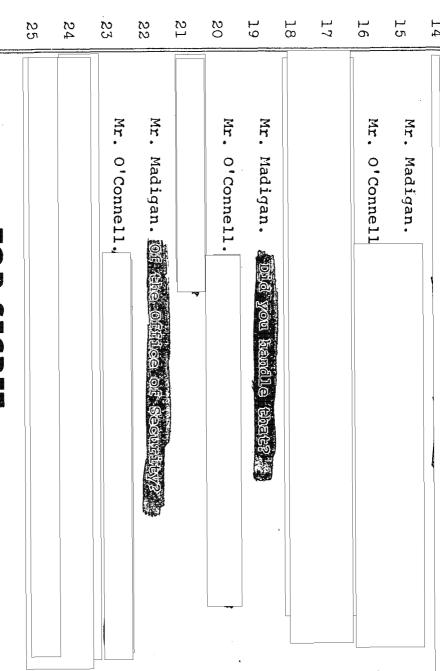
Mr. O'Connell. Enterways a feldow named

Mr. Madigan. Maneurapuok



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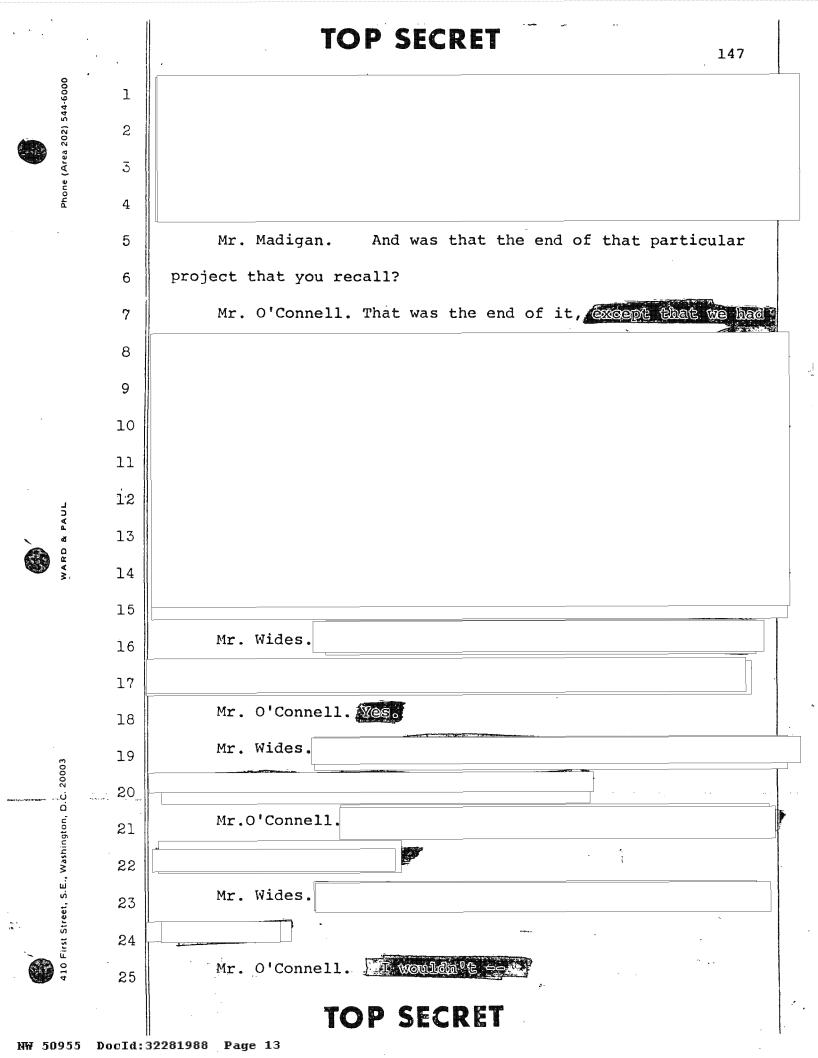


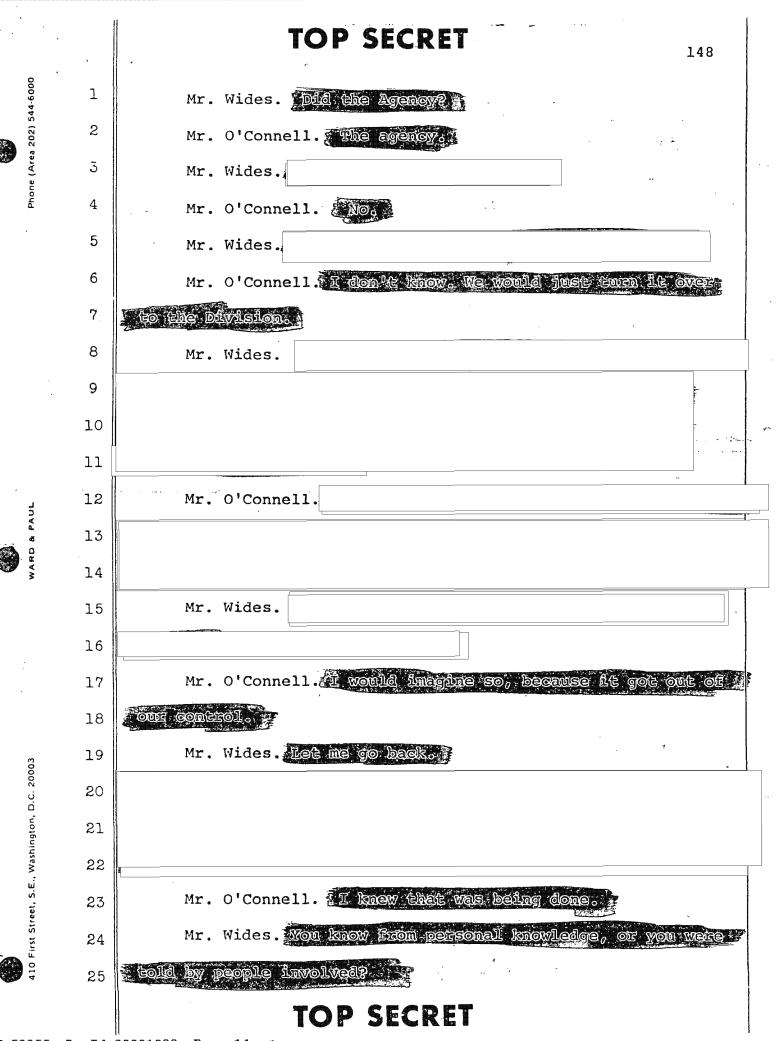
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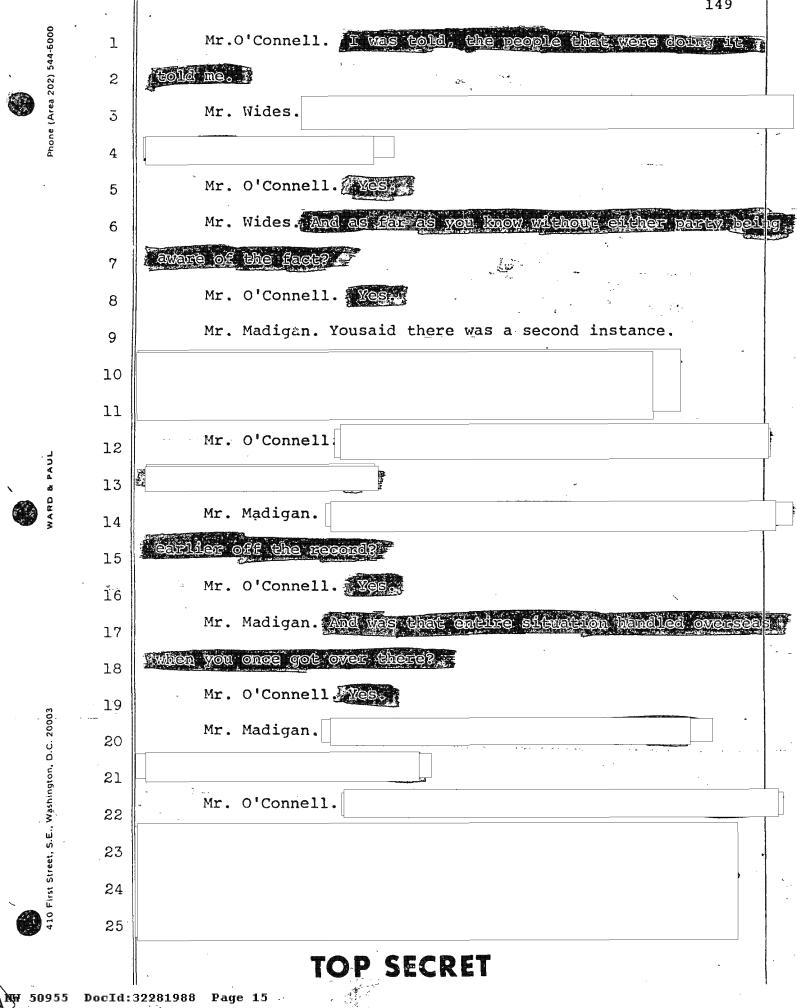


Phone (Area 202) 544-6000

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TOP SECRET	Mr. O'Connell. Nor at one time was the												
	-J												







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<b>A</b> Phone (Area 202) 544-6000	l		
	2		
e (Area	З		
Phon	4		
	5	Mr. Madigan. Did Maheu set that up?	
	6	Mr. O'Connelll. Yes.	
	7	Mr. Mdigan. Both the original contact and the late	r party
	8	in San Francisco?	
	9	Mr. O'Connell. Yes.	
	10	Mr. Madigan. And were those the only two times now	that
	11	he was involved in the operations field?	
	12	Mr. O'Connelll. Oh, no. He did a lot of other thi	ngs. 🖑
A PAUL	13	Mr. Madigan. Let me ask you this question.	
WARD	14	When Maheu was having his problems with the author	ities,
	15	was there any reference back to his involvement in thos	e kind of
	16	activities, or was the only discussion about his role i	n
	17	the so-called assassination plot?	
and the f	18	Mr. O'Connell. Well, I am not even so sure that	they got
~	19	into that aspect of it. It was just that he was involv	ed
. 20003	20	to the extent that he had set up the operation against	Rowan,
ton, D.C	21	or he was the one that got in touch with DuBois to do i	t.
. Washington, D.C. 20003	22	Mr. Wides. When did you come back from overseas?	
S.E.	23	Mr. O'Connell. July of 1965.	
et Street	24	Mr. Wides. After you came back did you learn of a	time,
110 Firs	25	either after you came back or very shortly before you c	ame
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W7 50055	Dec 7-1	IVP JECKEI	reference and the second s

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l	veillance?
2	Mr. O'Connell. Never, to my knowledge he never got
3	involved in that, officially or otherwise.
4	Mr. Wides. Or surreptitious entry?
5	Mr. O'Connell. He did one surreptitious entry for us once.
6	Mr. Wides. What were the specifics of that?
7	Mr. O'Connell. There were a group of students.
8	
9	And they were staying
10	in a rooming house up there right outside of Georgetown some-
11	here. And one of the students
12	Fand said that one of the group was acting very suspiciously,
13	taking a lot of notes where they were not supposed to be taking
14	notes, or certainly after operational briefings, and he would go
15	back to his room and he would write voluminous notes. And
16	he thought that was very strange that this guy was not acting
17	as he should.
18	And that aroused the suspicion
19	And they wanted to know whether we would get in and photo-
20	graph what he was writing to see whether he was really
21	violating his agreement.
22	So I called Maheu and he went up to the rooming house, and
23	he went to the people who owned the house and asked if they
24	had a room to rent and she had one. And he did know where the
25	students were staying. And she showed him one room. And
5 DTJ-7	TOP SECRET

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Phone (Area 202) 544-6000

WARD & PAUL

	TOP SECRET
l	he said, anything up on thenext floor? And as luck would
2	have it, she had the adjacent room.
3	So he brought what would appear to be a suitcase up there,
4	which was his photographic equipment. And we knew the students
5	were in school, andwas going to alert us if
6	they came back, so he wouldn't get caught in the act.
7	And he went in, it was a very simple matter. It was
8	a tin box that he could open with a paper clip and he took it out
9	and photographed it, and put the case back in the drawer and
10	locked up and left.
11	But was a gal, a woman. And she was
12	looking at one part of the school over there. And this guy
13	comes out the back door. And as Maheu was coming down the
14	stairs the students were coming up, with amatter of maybe
15	a split second timing.
16	Mr. Madigan. This wasn't Mendoz?
17	Mr. O'Connell. No.
18	Mr. Wides. What period was this that we are talking
19	about?
20	Mr. O'Connell. This would have been about 1955.
21	Mr. Wides. And other than that, and the two incidents
22	involving female companioship, what other kinds of sensitive
23	things would he undertake? Was that in the period that you
24	were paying him 500 a month?
25	Mr. O'Connell. We stopped paying the 500 way back when he
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Phone (Area 202) 544-6000

WARD & PAUL

Mr. O'Connell. We had word that they wanted to --

nature as opposed to routine?

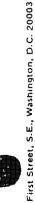


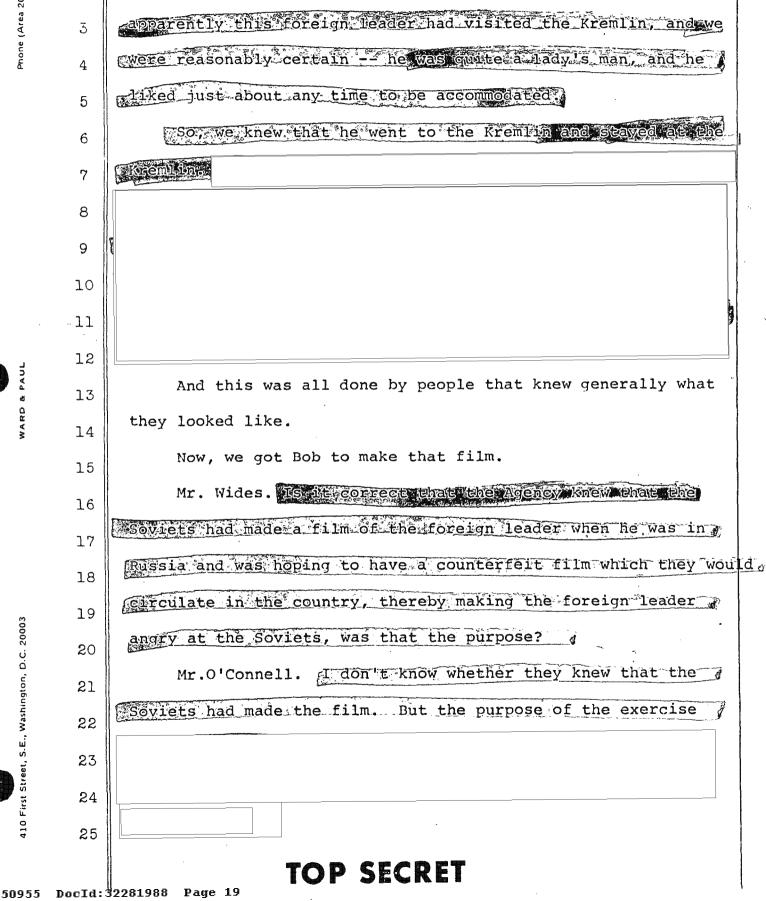
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l	Mr. Wides. You mean they thought that the Russians	
. 2	had made a film?	
õ	Mr. O'Connell. Yes, to embarrass him.	
4	Mr. Madigan. And that was accomplished as far as you know	v?
5	Mr. O'Connell. The film was made, but they never did	
6	release it, because things started to get better with the	
7	leader, and they felt that they wouldn't use it.	
8	Mr. Madigan. Were Agency facilities used by Maheu for	
9	the production of this thing?	
10	Mr. O'Connell . No. I hired a small independent studio i	n.
11	Los Angeles.	
12	Mr. Madigan. And did Agency officials fly out there,	
13	the ones that knew about the backdrop and all that? How was	
14	that done?	
15	Mr. O'Connell. It seems to me that they were just	
16	at this point I am not too sure whether they superimposed it,	
17	I guess is the word, with that background. I am not so	
18	sure at this point, it has been so long ago. That was away in	
19	the mid-fifties.	
20	Mr. Wides. Could we get back to the question that we had	
21	started on, which was the files and where they would exist?	
22	You said that the operational files from all of your dealing	
23	with him would be in the Family Jewels, because they were all	
24	sessitive admissions.	
25	Mr. O'Connell. Yes.	
	TOP SECRET	

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Phone (Area 202) 544-6000

WARD & PAUL

		TOP SECRET	
-6000	1	Mr. O'Connell. No.	
02) 544	2	Mr. Wides. Or Max Gonzales.	
Phone (Area 202) 544-6000	3	Mr. O'Connell. No.	
	4	Mr. Wides. While you were down there and this	
	5	may overlap the question that Mr. Madigan asked before, but	
	6	I think it is a little more did you have any awareness of	
	7	any other efforts apart from Mr. Verona by Cubans in connec-	
	8	tion with the Agency to try and assassinate Castro?	
	9	Mr. O'Connell. No, none whatsoever.	
	10	Mr. Wides. I don't have any other questions.	
	11	Mr. Madigan. In your operational activities with Mr.	
L.	12	Maheu, particularly in the New York area, did you ever have cor	↓
& PAUL	13	tact with a private investigator by the name of A. J.	- *
WARD	14	Woolston-Smith?	·
	15	Mr. O'Connell. No, I never heard of him.	
	16	Mr. Wides. Do you know why there were two field	
	-17	offices in New York, two iffices in Manhatten?	
	.18	What was the difference?	
First Street, S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003	19	Mr. O'Connell. The cover.	
	20		
	21	Mr. Wides. Were there two offices?	
	22	Mr. O'Connell. Why, they had them, it just grew like	
	23 23	Topsy. They had two offices in Washington, and they had two	
	24	offices in New York. And really the basis it was that that	
410 Fi	25	was the way they started, they figured they needed two	
0055 7	antd-7		

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0000	1	different type covers because of the type of work they were
Phone (Area 202) 544-6000	2	doing.
(Area 21	3	Mr. Wides. What would the New York offices do as dis-
Phone (	4	tinct from the Manhattan offices, or vice versa?
	5	Mr. O'Connell. Nothing. They were basically investigative
	6	offices.
	.7	Mr. Wides. They just happened to have two?
	8	Mr.O'Connell. They had two.
	Ĺ	MI.O COMMETI. They had two.
	9 10	The Manhattan field office. And then they eventually merged.
	11	Now they are over on I think.
		Mr. Wides. Thank you very much. That concludes the session
	12	
RD R	13	And we appreciate your staying so long.
end	14	(Whereupon, at 1:25 p.m., the hearing was concluded.)
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